

## Emergency, Urgent and “Acute” (Inpatient) Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Vancouver General Hospital offers a range of specialized services for adults 17 and older experiencing crisis with mental illness and/or addiction.

### **Urgent Mental Health & Substance Use Assessment and Treatment**

Access & Assessment Center (AAC)

803 West 12th (Joseph & Rosalie Segal & Family Health Center)

Telephone: 604-675-3700

Open 7:30am-11pm (Walk-ins welcome)

AAC is the entry point for people and their families with a wide range of mental health and substance use concerns, from mild depression or anxiety to acute psychosis. In some instances, AAC can do outreach visits to people in their homes.

### **VGH Emergency / PEAT / PAU**

Located at 920 West 10th Avenue.

PEAT is the new Psychiatric Emergency Assessment and Triage unit of the Emergency Department, designed to give special attention to people with mental health emergencies. PAU (Psychiatric Assessment Unit) is for short term stays of approximately 5 days or less. Referrals usually through VGH Emergency or AAC.

### **VGH Inpatient (short hospital stays)**

At 803 W. 12th (Joseph & Rosalie Segal & Family Health Center)

Four Inpatient units. Average stay will vary. Telephone: 604-875-4111

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

### **Family Connections Support Group**

1st Thurs & 3rd Mon of each month, 6-8pm

For further information or concerns, families are invited to contact the **Consumer and Family Support and Involvement Coordinator, Andrea Sierralta** at **604 290-3817** or **andrea.sierralta@vch.ca**.

More information on family involvement and support, including the Family Involvement Policy and Family Connections Newsletters, can be found at [www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com/family-involvement/](http://www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com/family-involvement/)

For more online information on mental health issues, please visit [heretohelp.bc.ca](http://heretohelp.bc.ca) and [health.gov.bc.ca](http://health.gov.bc.ca), the latter especially relating to the Mental Health Act.

For other general mental health and substance use related inquiries, please contact:

Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service  
Tel. 604-660-9382 or 1-800-663-1441

Your Local Crisis Line  
Tel. 1-888-353-2273 Access 24hrs/day without wait or busy signal

HealthLink BC  
Tel. 811; Website: [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)

Mental Health Information Line Tel. 1-800-661-2121

CIBC Center for Patients and Families, Jim Pattison Building, Vancouver General Hospital; Tel. 604-875-5887

Questions/complaints about quality of care:  
VCH Patient Care Quality Office  
Tel. 1-877-993-9199  
Email: [pcqo@vch.ca](mailto:pcqo@vch.ca)

[Brochure updated July 2021]

VGH is located on the shared traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples: Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Watuth Nations

## Family Connections

### Acute, Emergency & Urgent Mental Health & Substance Use Services



### Information for Families

**Vancouver  
CoastalHealth**  
*Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.*

# Navigating “Acute” and “Urgent” Services

## Referral...

### Overview:

“Acute” services Patients usually arrive because of a referral from a health care provider (e.g. family doctor, psychiatrist, specialist, counsellor, case manager at a Mental Health Team); as well as self referral, family concerns or police involvement.

After assessment, often the Access and Assessment Center (AAC) or Emergency Department determine that a person can be treated outside the hospital and will refer the person to appropriate services.

Around 30% of visitors to Emergency are admitted to the hospital because it is likely that hospitalization will improve their health. Occasionally, visitors are also admitted through the AAC.

### How you can be involved:

- Contact the AAC (formerly Mental Health Emergency) if you feel your loved one may need help
- Offer background information (“collateral”) about the person—e.g. disturbing behaviour or changes in behaviour, change in medication/drug use

### Questions? Talk to

- Your loved one’s existing GP or psychiatrist
- AAC – 604-675-3700
- Case Manager (if the person is part of a Mental Health Team)
- Physician, Psychiatrist or Psychiatric Triage Nurse if person is at Emergency
- Detox: (604) 658-1280

## Inpatient Treatment...

### Overview:

See overleaf for the various locations where your loved one may be treated.

Treatment usually involves medication and can also involve group therapy, programming (e.g. Yoga, Art & Crafts) and talk therapy (e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).)

Medication is prescribed by the doctor and administered by nurses. Programming, group therapy and talk therapy are offered by many different people, including Occupational Therapists and Psychologists.

VCH health care providers strive hard to provide a therapeutic environment and therapeutic interactions. Sometimes patients need to be restrained for safety but it is a last resort and should be of the shortest duration possible.

### How you can be involved:

- Ask your loved one how they want you to be involved
- Ask to be involved in treatment and discharge planning, in accordance with the Family Policy
- Offer background information (“collateral”) about the person
- Ask how the various disciplines (e.g. Occupational Therapist) can help your loved one
- Please follow the visitors policy

### Questions?

- Ask whether the unit where your loved one is staying has a brochure. Generally, you can talk to:
- Your loved one’s unit/inpatient ward: Nurse, Psychiatrist, Care Management Lead, Head Nurse, or Social Worker (604-875-4111)
  - Your loved one’s Case Manager (if the person is part of a Mental Health Team)
  - Your loved one’s existing GP or psychiatrist

## Transition...

### Overview:

Often your loved one will transition to “Community” or to another unit.

### Community

- If your loved one does not go back home, they might go to a transition unit such as Venture (a short term group home) or to one of various forms of supported housing
- Whether or not your loved one returns home, it is best if he or she receives a referral to continuing help, such as a Mental Health Team, Outpatient Psychiatry, family doctor/psychiatrist and/or community resource such as Canadian Mental Health Association.

### Continuing Inpatient or “Tertiary” (Long Stay)

- Your loved one may be transferred to another unit
- Your loved one may be transferred/recommended for a longer (“Tertiary”) stay lasting two months and longer

### How you can be involved:

- Ask to be involved in discharge and transition planning. You do not need to receive your loved one back home if you are convinced this is detrimental to your or your loved one’s health
- If your loved one leaves hospital, ask to see their “When I Leave Hospital” form
- Ask about ongoing treatment plans and referrals

### Questions?

- See “Questions?” under “treatment”
- Mental Health & Addiction Supported Housing Services 604.675.3898

**Need more information or support? Contact the Family and Consumer Support & Involvement Coordinator @ 604-290-3817**